

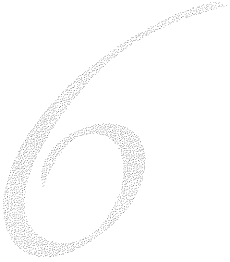
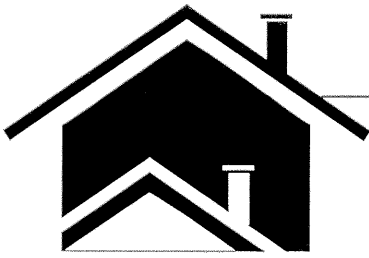
## ASSET PROFILE

### Issue Area: Neighborhood Commercial Facilities

With the strong spirit of renewal and economic turnaround Detroit is experiencing, Cluster 6, like many neighborhoods in the city of Detroit, contains many opportunities for new development and revitalization. One of the Cluster's most recent opportunities is the designation of one of its areas as a Renaissance Zone. *The Detroit News* has predicted, "This [Renaissance Zone] will be the most successful urban policy we've put in place in two decades." The bill created eight tax-free zones — five in urban centers and three in rural areas. The zones exempt residents and businesses in the designated areas from paying all property taxes, state and city income taxes. The Single Business Tax is also waived for businesses.

The Renaissance Zone represents just one of several opportunities for the cluster. A range of other opportunities have been identified through focus groups, visioning, goal setting sessions, the cluster tour, and through surveys of current conditions. Some of these led to the creation of the neighborhood commercial reinvestment recommendations and include:

- the central location of the cluster and its close proximity to downtown making it accessible to people all around the city
- the potential for new housing development based upon need and available land, creating opportunities for new commercial development tied to new housing
- the cluster's major transportation routes, affording easy access to the Cluster and enabling support of new business development
- existing commercial strips, once viable but now deteriorated, providing opportunities for revitalization (see the current condition neighborhood commercial map at the end of this section)
- available land and zoning making possible the creation of neighborhood based businesses, including open markets within walking distances for residents (refer to the vacant land and zoning maps in the Special Issues Section).



## Current Neighborhood Commercial Conditions

A Renaissance Zone is located in an industrial park in the Lyndon and Intervale area. Only a portion of the zone rests in Cluster 6. A bus tour of the area by Cluster Board members revealed an area currently overwhelmed by debris, weeds, overgrown brush and dumping. The bright spot in the area is the recent opening of SBF Automotive, Inc., a joint venture operation between two minority businessmen. As new businesses establish themselves in the area, it is expected that the value, safety and beautification of the industrial park as a whole will greatly improve. It is hoped that the businesses in the zone will practice neighborhood consciousness by employing residents and supporting neighborhood enhancement initiatives.

Opportunities for neighborhood enhancement exist in other economic developments underway. Cluster 6 has three projects listed on Detroit's Priority Development Project map on pages 83 and 84.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| • Ford Hospital Systems         | \$75 million annex to Ford Hospital        |
| • Comprehensive Health Services | \$10 million full-service health center    |
| • Focus:HOPE                    | \$3.5 million two-story classroom addition |

These projects have reached public disclosure level and are pinpointed on the Detroit Priority Development Projects Map at the end of this section. A legend identifying each project follows the map. These major institutional projects could afford opportunities such as training and employment for Cluster residents. More discussion on these projects is found in the Organizational Profile and Job Centers sections of this report.

The two business associations in Cluster 6, the West Warren Avenue Merchants and the Livernois-Grand-Elm Business Association, (see Organizational Profile section) are active and have plans to work towards revitalization of their respective blocks, an important factor in attracting and retaining customers and new businesses.

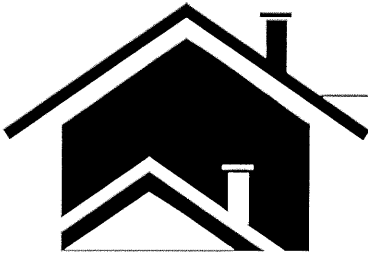
The Livernois and Davison business intersection is home to several long term businesses; Livernois-Davison Florist and the Shrine of the Black Madonna Bookstore. Other newer businesses include Dock's Fish, a Rite Aid Drug Store, and Autoworks. Two gas stations are located in this area. The Cluster is also home to one of the first branches of the minority owned First Independence Bank, located south of this area on Livernois.



Many Detroiters shop outside the city. A 1992 Detroit Retail Sales map by zipcodes indicates that the volume of retail sales for Cluster 6 was \$50,000 to \$99,000 for the majority of the zipcodes (Source: Wayne State University, Center for Urban Studies, MIMIC). However, zipcode 48208 has the lowest level volume of sales, \$50,000 and below. Clearly these are important considerations for reinvestment resulting in neighborhood businesses and services. The Retail Map is included at the end of this section.

MIMIC provides a view of current services, commercial and retail facilities in the Cluster via geographic mapping. A map of neighborhood commercial conditions is included at the end of this section. Major thoroughfares such as Linwood, Grand River, Joy Road, West Warren, and West Grand Boulevard, have an estimated 115 commercial businesses ranging from neighborhood party stores, such as the Oasis, to apparel stores on the "Avenue of Fashion," to companies such as Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Of Michigan, Detroit Production Center, and others. The map identifies 131 services. Services are defined as personal business, automotive repair, movie theaters, recreation, health, legal, educational, and social opportunities. These range from small physicians offices to large funeral homes such as the James H. Cole Home for Funerals, and from utility companies such as Detroit Edison to Harold's Place for Hair and Nails.

Several main arteries, such as Grand River, Dexter, and Livernois, run through Cluster 6. Historically these streets have been home to viable neighborhood commercial facilities such as grocery stores, dry cleaners, drug stores, new and used car dealerships, furniture stores, hardware stores and apparel and accessories stores. The current conditions map shows several commercial strips with advanced to major signs of decline. Advanced decline denotes that 25 to 50 percent of the area suffers from deterioration. Over 50 percent over the area has declined if shown as major. Suburban flight, economic downturn, and the 1967 civil disturbance, originating on 12th Street in Cluster 6, are all factors that led to a decline in the number of businesses in the Cluster. According to the DMP, freeways, especially the Jeffries, also contributed to the decline of businesses along Grand River. An article in the *Detroit Free Press* (December 1997) discusses how small businesses have suffered as a result of the development of I-96. However, Cluster 6 is recommending that Grand River and an area immediately north of Edsel Ford Freeway (I-94), west of John C. Lodge (M-10) and south of West Grand Boulevard be targeted for redevelopment and reinvestment (see the potential retail centers site map on page ???).

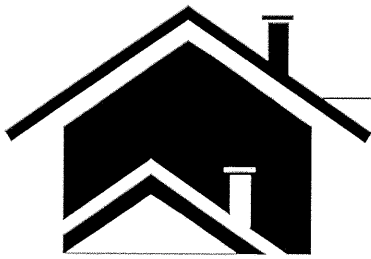


Residents commonly desire large commercial developments such as Home Depot and Target to provide access to products within the city. However, for such development to occur numerous challenges must be met. Aside from the need for large parcels of land, a healthy business climate, and appropriate economic demographics, investors also study traffic flow and traffic counts. A review of the Annual Average Daily Traffic Count (AADT) prepared by SEMCOG reveals interesting counts in Cluster 6. The following chart provides a snapshot of the commercial areas with the highest AADT's in Cluster 6. A review of AADT actual counts in the transportation section shows that the counts in these areas are comparatively low, with highest counts occurring along freeway areas.

**Table #11**

<b>Commercial Areas with Highest Traffic Counts</b>	
<b>Retail Location/Area</b>	<b>Selected Features</b>
Livernois and Davison	Long time businesses/ some new stores/ active business association/near Renaissance Zone
Davison and Dexter	Mature business strip in need of support, new stores, facade improvements
Livernois and Grand River	Several fast food chains, signs of slow revitalization
Oakman Blvd. and Grand River	Older commercial intersection (only south side of Grand River in Cluster), needs revitalizing or rezoning
Grand River and Joy Rd.	Former commercial intersection, includes old Riveria Theater site and some small retailers and shops, needs revitalizing or rezoning.

Such counts were likely considered in creation of policies in the DMP. In the "near north-west" (includes only sections of Cluster 6) the city DMP proposes: "Promote the location of retail uses in existing shopping areas: the Virginia Park shopping center; Dexter-Davison; or along the Dexter, Linwood, West Chicago, Joy or Livernois commercial frontages. Develop major commercial centers at Rosa Parks at West Philadelphia; Grand River at West Grand Boulevard; Grand River at Dexter; Dexter at Davison; and Grand River at Oakman. Develop smaller commercial centers at West Grand Boulevard at Linwood; Dexter at Joy Road; Grand River at Joy Road; Livernois at Grand River; and Livernois at Lyndon." These recommendations support traffic patterns and current commercial uses identified in the area, and follow the suggestions of focus group participants for the best retail locations.

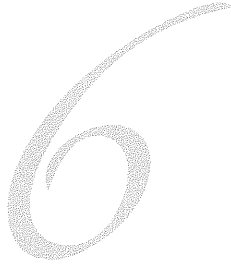


## Neighborhood Commercial Features

Several unique commercial features in Cluster 6 are assets to the community. The most unique commercial feature within Cluster 6 is the Virginia Park Shopping Center. This Center is believed to be the only non-profit shopping center in the United States. The community-based Virginia Park Community Investment Association developed the center in 1982. The Virginia Park Plaza was financed through the sale of bonds to the community for as low as \$25 per share, making the center a community owned venture. Farmer Jack, a major grocery store chain, made a commitment to investment in the city of Detroit by leasing space for a new store to serve as an anchor to the center. Other leases included Perry Drugs, Bonanza Restaurant, Dino's Pizza, a laundromat, and an auto parts store. Over the years occupancy has changed, however the laundromat remains. Other businesses include a Rite Aid Drug Store, Comerica Bank, Dollar City, Little Caesar's Pizza, a casual wear apparel shop, and the China 1 Restaurant. The Association has recently completed face-lift enhancements for the center.

Just West of Ford Hospital on West Grand Boulevard is a mixture of older brick residential homes that were converted to businesses. Many of the homes are minority-owned small businesses. While some are struggling, others, such as Brazelton Florist Shop, appear to be doing well. The shopping area at Oakman and the south side of Grand River is another struggling commercial strip that has declined over time. More than a decade ago the area was anchored by Sears and Federal department stores. Meyers Jewelry, Cunningham Drugs, and the Beverly Theatre were supporting businesses. Many residents of the area remember the convenience of shopping in the area, as opposed to driving out of the city to the malls. Neighborhood commercial reinvestment recommendations reflect this remembrance and the desire to see the area redeveloped. The area remains a shopping center, however it lacks the presence of a major anchor store to encourage greater use and development.

Another shopping area that shows significant decline is the Joy Road/Grand River intersection, formerly the location of the Riviera Theater, S.S. Kresge, and a former bank converted to a post office. This location currently houses a retail store catering to discount convenience shopping, small restaurants, a barber college and several closed businesses.



## Current Neighborhood Commercial Use

Focus Group participants were asked four questions regarding their current use of the neighborhood commercial facilities: "Why don't you shop within your area?", "What would you like to see in the area?" and "What is overrepresented in the area?" They were also asked the question, "What is essential to quality of life?"

### *Why don't you shop within your area?*

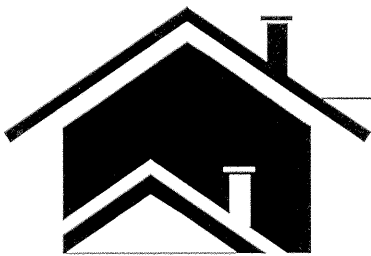
Participants noted that there are a limited number of shops in the area and they lack variety and have limited selection. Inferior products/goods, unclean stores that sometimes smell bad, lack of fresh meats and vegetables, and higher prices for neighborhood goods were other reasons for not shopping locally cited by residents. In addition, loitering in front of stores, lack of security, bad attitudes of some store owners and employees, and a lack of parking were also mentioned as reasons for not shopping in the area.

### *What would you like to see in your neighborhood?*

Participants indicated that they would like to see additional strip malls with shoe repairs and retail stores, as well as conveniently located gas stations and working public phones. Participants expressed a desire for local entertainment including movie theaters, bowling alleys, mini-golf, and skating rinks. Many participants wanted to see major retail stores located within the Cluster such as Target Stores, Builders Square and Home Depot. Participants also desire family style restaurants located within the Cluster. Presently, residents have to leave the Cluster and/or the city to access these types of businesses.

### *What is over represented in your area?*

Participants felt that there were too many coney island restaurants, liquor stores, video stores, billboards, fast food restaurants and group and adult foster homes. Also, participants noted too many vacant commercial sites and far too many vacant, trash filled lots, and businesses selling products apart from the type of store they operate such as party stores selling beepers, cell phones, and clothing. Participants believe this discourages reinvestment.



### *What is essential to quality of life?*

In response to this question, participants expressed a desire for family recreation activities, clean and well stocked grocery stores, open markets like the Eastern Market, conveniently located banks and ATM machines. The formation of more business and neighborhood associations and economic development/non profit organizations would empower more neighborhoods and community leaders thereby positively impacting the quality of life. Information collected about existing organizations (see Organizational Profile section) may require the Cluster to consider ways to use existing assets through greater networking and coordination, currently attempted through the council of presidents of organizations.

The concept of "new urbanism" (*The New Urbanism: Toward an Architect of Community, 1994*) espouses "a wide mix of housing types and price ranges, all placed on an interwoven grid of narrow streets leading to a traditional town square bordered by shops and offices." New urbanism promotes a quality of life through a return to local shopping with businesses owned by residents. Rezoning and reduction in red tape are also recommended by the new urbanism. Conceptually, many Cluster recommendations, such as those focusing on open markets and creating a job center in the Edsel Ford (I-94)/John C. Lodge Fwys./W. Grand Blvd. area, are consistent with this national "new urbanism" movement.

Finally, as a result of downsizing and a volatile employment climate, many persons are opting to open their own businesses. The One Stop Capital Shop, the Federal Small Business Administration and local universities have classes designed for people interested in opening their own business, that support the efforts of entrepreneurs. A new program sponsored by the Greater Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, "An Income of Her Own," encourages 13-18 year old females to think about becoming doctors and lawyers, and to consider owning their medical practice or law firm. The Family Independence Agency also has a program designed to move clients from welfare roles into the business world as an owner of businesses. Cluster 6 could utilize some of these resources to promote small business owner reinvestment in its struggling commercial strips.